

Code of Conduct

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1. Introduction

Futura Learning Partnership (the trust) expects the highest standards of conduct from all our staff. Staff for the purposes of this Code of Conduct shall mean anyone who works for the trust, including trustees, governors, employees, agency workers, volunteers and contractors.

This Code sets out the professional standards expected and the duty upon all staff working for the trust to abide by it. It is intended to help staff understand their responsibilities and be clear about what is acceptable conduct and what is not.

Any breach of its terms may result in disciplinary action for an employee, the cessation of contractual relations with agency staff and contractors or, in the case of volunteers, the termination of the volunteering agreement.

Staff are required to sign and return an Annual Code of Conduct Declaration in September confirming their agreement to meet and comply with the Code of Conduct. Please refer to Appendix 1.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all staff engaged as teachers have an obligation to adhere to the most recent “Teachers’ Standards” and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers’ Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct. All staff must read and comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education (as amended).

This Code does not form part of any contract of employment or contract to provide services and we may amend it at any time.

2. General Obligations of Trust Staff

If any staff are unsure what is expected of them, they must raise the matter with their Headteacher /Line Manager. This conversation should usually take place within a 1 – 1 meeting.

The trust expects all staff to deal with one another, the public, pupils and parents in a courteous and civil manner. Relationships between work colleagues should be supportive, cooperative and respectful.

Staff should behave in a way that enhances the performance and wellbeing of others and the effectiveness of the trust. Staff must aim to promote harmonious and professional relationships with all colleagues. It is understood that, at times, differences of opinions can occur and at such times it is expected that employees will attempt to resolve matters informally in the first instance unless they feel unable to do so in which case they should refer the matter to their line manager.

Staff are required to notify their line manager immediately regarding any circumstances that may impact their employment and/or their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) status. Staff are required to inform their Headteacher/line manager immediately if arrested (or as soon as practically possible) or the subject of a police investigation or receive any conviction, caution or reprimand. See also Section 10 ‘Criminal Charges and/or Convictions’.

Line managers must also be informed of other relevant changes such as, change to home address or personal circumstances.

Any breach of this code or related policies listed below may lead to disciplinary action and may in some instances constitute gross misconduct. The trust reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of this code are deemed to warrant such action.

All staff must be familiar with and act in accordance with the most recent versions of all trust's policies which are available on SharePoint - [SharePoint Policies](#)

Staff should understand the responsibilities that are an intrinsic part of their employment or role. They should make a professional judgement about their actions and behaviour and seek to avoid conduct, which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.

If there is a situation where staff feel there may be a concern, they should discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed course of action with a senior colleague to ensure that the safest practices are followed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted. Please refer to Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations Against Staff Policy where there is also a section on dealing with low level concerns – Section 7.

An employee who fails to bring a matter of concerns to the attention of a senior manager and/or the relevant agencies is likely to be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at work

The trust Board and executive leadership team wishes to create an environment where all staff are treated with dignity and respect and are committed to achieving equality of choice as an employer of people, provider of services, educator and community leader.

All staff are expected to adopt the Trust's vision of equality of opportunity and ensure that all Policies and Procedures including the trust's Equality and Diversity policy are adhered to at all times. The trust's policies and procedures are available on SharePoint.

Staff must not discriminate, harass or victimise someone because they have or are perceived to have a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Staff must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

4. Employment Matters

Personal Relationships

There is a requirement to declare any intimate relationship between:

- Senior manager/line manager and employee who reports to them (or in any role that may be deemed to be a conflict of interest).
- Governors/trustees and employees
- Employees and current or potential future suppliers of goods and/or services to the trust.

Where a relationship involves the Headteacher/Director, this declaration should be provided to the Director/Chief Executive. Where a relationship involves the Chief Executive this should be reported to the Chair of Trustees.

Following a declaration there will be a risk assessment and there may be a requirement for either member of staff to move to another area of the trust.

Pecuniary Interests

Please note that should an occasion arise in the future when a business or pecuniary interest might apply e.g. a close relative applies for a job in the trust, the interest should be notified immediately to the Headteacher/Director/CE.

All trust staff involved in appointments and/or a tendering process should ensure that:

- These are made on the basis of merit.
- They are not involved in an appointment or decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship.
- All relationships of a business or private nature with current external contractors, or potential contractors should be made known to the Line Manager/Headteacher/Director/CE at the earliest opportunity.

Staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer your concerns to the attention of the Headteacher or where the concern relates to the Headteacher to the Chief Executive.

5. Public Duty and Private Interest

It is important that members of staff do not put themselves in a position where their duty to the trust and their private interest's conflict. Staff should not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and the provision of a balanced and professional service, ensuring that they work to the professional standard required at all times.

6. Register of Business Interests

A register of the personal and business interests of each trustee, governor, member and key management personnel is held by the Clerk (or in the case of key management personnel, by the Chief Operating Office) and is available for inspection at each meeting of the Trust Broad and its committees, including Local Governance Committees.

It is the responsibility of each trustee, governor and member of staff with significant financial responsibility to declare any personal and business interests they have which require inclusion in the register. Any trustee, governor or member of staff who has an interest in a business tendering for a contract, will not form part of the committee awarding the contract. Responsibilities and the annual declaration form are detailed in the Finance Policy. The Register of interests for Trustees Members and Local Governors is published on the trust/schools' website.

7. Other Employment/Private Work

Any external work that trust staff undertake must not bring the trust into disrepute or conflict with the trust's interests.

Any copyright created by a member of staff as a result of work within the trust during their employment with the trust becomes the property of the trust.

Members of trust staff should not set up a business or accept employment with a business that is engaged in work, which is in direct competition with the trust.

Members of the trust staff should not undertake private work in the trust's time, or using the trust's premises or equipment, without prior approval of the Headteacher/ Director /CE.

8. Use of Trust Time and Facilities

Trust property and facilities (e.g. stationery, computers, and photocopiers) may only be used for trust business unless permission for their private use has been granted by the Headteacher/Director/CE and payment agreed.

9. Publication of Books/Articles

If trust staff wish to publish books, articles, letters, dissertations etc. that they have written in connection with their duties and in which they describe themselves as holding an appointment with the trust they must consult the Headteacher prior to any such agreement being made.

10. Criminal Charges and/or Convictions

A member of staff must immediately notify their Headteacher/Director/CE if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at the School/Trust (this includes outside of their working hours).

The Headteacher/Director/CE may then make a decision with reference to the disciplinary process as to whether this constitutes unprofessional conduct and whether there has been a breakdown in the bond of trust necessary between employer and employee. In such cases, dismissal may be appropriate.

Each case will be considered independently and on its merits. It is likely that the Headteacher/Director/CE would view any conviction for possession of prohibited drugs, sexual misconduct, theft, misappropriation of school funds or equipment, violent conduct, disorderly conduct in a public place etc. as gross misconduct, within the general heading of “professional misconduct” and therefore the member of staff concerned would be liable for dismissal.

Please read in conjunction with Section 2 – General obligations of trust staff.

11. Prohibited substances

Smoking on all trust sites is prohibited.

The use, possession, distribution or sale of drugs is prohibited and constitutes gross misconduct which could result in dismissal. Staff are expressly prohibited from working whilst under the influence of non-prescribed drugs or alcohol, and any breach of this may lead to dismissal.

Staff must bring to the attention of their Line Manager any medication or illness which may affect their work performance or behaviour.

12. Dress Code

As role models to pupils in our schools, the trust expects staff to dress in a professional manner which expresses both personal dignity and appropriate modesty. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

The following dress code applies to all staff, with any variation being at the discretion of the relevant Headteacher / Director/CE:

- Trust provided clothing such as polo shirts/outer wear PPE e.g. catering and site staff must be worn
- No denim unless participating on a trip/visit
- Clothing that is likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative e.g. tight clothing must not be worn
- Clothing that is considered to be discriminatory and culturally insensitive must not be worn
- Visible tattoos are discouraged
- Discreet piercings are acceptable

Where there is a refusal to comply with the dress code this may result in disciplinary action.

Staff badges where required must be worn at all times.

13. Virtual Meetings

Virtual meetings should be conducted in line with virtual meetings good practice.

All staff must be aware that it is not permitted or acceptable to record any virtual meeting or conversation without the knowledge and advance consent of the other persons involved. Any breach will be managed in line with the disciplinary policy.

14. Staff Wellbeing

All staff are encouraged to look after their physical and mental well-being. This includes maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Please refer to the trust's wellbeing policy

- The trust takes staff wellbeing very seriously, and looks to provide and promote appropriate support and help that can be accessed.
- Staff needing support are encouraged to discuss issues and concerns with their line manager in the first instance, and thereafter with the Headteacher /Director .
- Support can be provided both internally (e.g. through the provision of a mentor), externally through the MyBenefits Platform
- Trades Unions also provide help, support and advice for their members.

15. Conduct outside of work

- Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the Trust, or the their own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- Criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct will be regarded as unacceptable and dealt with under the trust's Disciplinary Policy.
- Behaviour or activities that have the potential to make employees unsuitable for the role they are employed to perform will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

16. E-Safety and Internet Use

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regards should be given to the trust's IT Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

Members of staff must not use equipment belonging to the trust to access pornography; neither should personal equipment containing pornographic images or links to them be brought into the workplace. Doing so will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the employee to continue to work in schools and could lead to dismissal for gross misconduct.

Members of staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the Trust, School community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Members of staff must exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web-based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where they could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly. Staff must not link themselves with the Trust on any social network site they use unless with prior consent of the Headteacher/Director.

Staff must not respond to negative comments posted online but bring this to the attention of the Headteacher/Director.

Staff must only contact students via Trust/Trust authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students unless there is a specified reason for this and it has been declared to the Headteacher or DSL.

Staff must report to the Headteacher any contact by a student by an inappropriate route.

Photographs/still images or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the trust. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur in accordance with the Trust's Privacy Notice or where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the trust's procedures on trust equipment.

17. Confidentiality

Members of staff must not reveal confidential information about students or their parents or carers except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student.

Members of staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another student (or by another member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate Trust procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school/trust except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

18. General

This Code of Conduct is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and behaviour and, in circumstances where guidance does not exist, individuals are expected to use their professional judgement, comply with professional standards and Government guidance on safer working practices and act in the interests of the Trust, the school within which they work and its pupils. The fact that a specific unacceptable behaviour is not explicitly covered within this policy will not condone that action.

All members of staff regardless of seniority are to bring to the notice of their immediate line manager on an 'in confidence' basis any matter whether personal or professional which may be in conflict with either the letter or spirit of these guidelines.

The Trust shall ensure that all staff receive the relevant training, advice, guidance and support required to work within a school/trust environment and to fulfil their job role and responsibilities. It is a requirement that all staff follow the trust policies and participate in appropriate and relevant training and development. Staff should always keep abreast of policy and best practice in relation to keeping children safe and pay close attention to information shared by the Trust.

19. Review

This Code will be reviewed every 3 years or as required following:

- a. Any legislative changes or changes to guidance that may impact on it.
- b. Any changes to other associated internal policies, processes or procedures.
- c. Any breach or other incident relating to the issues addressed in this Code.

Appendix 1 Confirmation of Compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read and understood the trust's Code of Conduct and understand that it is my responsibility to be familiar with and abide by its terms.

The trust will require signed confirmation on an annual basis and written confirmation will be retained.